

Message Text

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ACTION OES-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AF-08 ARA-06 EA-07 NEA-10
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AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08
FPC-01 H-01 INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
OMB-01 PM-04 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-07
FEA-01 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /138 W
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O R 311824Z MAR 77

FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3435

INFO ALL EC CAPITALS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EEC, ENRG, TECH, MNUC

SUBJECT: EC RESEARCH COUNCIL, MARCH 29, 1977: RESULTS

REFS: (A) 76 EC BRUSSELS 10458; (B) 76 EC BRUSSELS 11366

1. SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND: A CAREFULLY ORCHESTRATED COMPROMISE
COLLAPSED AS THE EC RESEACH MINISTERS AT THEIR MARCH 29
COUNCIL MEETING WERE UNABLE FOR THE FOURTH TIME IN SIXTEEN
MONTHS TO REACH A DECISION ON A SITE FOR THE JOINT EUROPEAN
TORUS (JET). INTENSIVE CONSULTATIONS DURING RECENT WEEKS IN THE
MAJOR EC CAPITALS BY EC RESEARCH AND ENERGY COMMISSIONER
GUIDO BRUNNER AND UK SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY BENN HAD
PRODUCED AN "UNDERSTANDING" THAT THE MAJOR CONTENDERS FOR THE
JET SITE WOULD AGREE THAT JET BE LOCATED IN CULHAM IN THE UK.
WHILE NOT AN EXPLICIT TRADEOFF, THIS "UNDERSTANDING" FORESAW
THAT THE UK, IN RETURN, IN THE ENERGY COUNCIL (WHICH ALSO TOOK
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PLACE ON MARCH 29) WOULD CONCURRENTLY LIFT ITS YEAR-OLD RESERVE
ON THE EURATOM CONSTRUCTION LOAN PROGRAM. ISPRA, THE ITALIAN SITE
FAVORED EARLIER BY THE COMMISSION, WAS TO BE COMPENSATED, IN
RETURN FOR DROPPING OUT OF THE JET SWEEPSTAKES, WITH A LARGE
SHARE OF THE EC'S NON-JET FUSION RESEARCH IN THE MULTI-ANNUAL
JOINT RESEARCH CENTER PROGRAM. WHILE SOME BRITISH OFFICIALS
REMAINED CONCERNED THAT THE LIFTING OF THE EURATOM LOAN VETO

WOULD DEPRIVE HMG OF LEVERAGE TO PRESS FOR ACTION ON A MINIMUM SUPPORT PRICE FOR OIL (MSP), MINISTER BENN WAS SUFFICIENTLY CONFIDENT IN THE OUTCOME ON JET SITING, ACCORDING TO UK PERMDEL SOURCES, TO SCHEDULE A RESEARCH COUNCIL FOR THE SAME DAY AS THE PREVIOUSLY PLANNED MARCH 29 ENERGY COUNCIL.

2. THOUGH THE FIRST ELEMENT FELL IN PLACE AT THE ENRGY COUNCIL (WHICH DIRECTLY PRECEDED THE RESEARCH COUNCIL ON THE 29TH -- SEE SPETEL), WITH THE UK LIFTING IT EURATOM LOAN RESERVE (AND GAINING A COMMITMENT THAT MSP SHOULD BE DISCUSSED FORMALLY BY THE COMMISSION AND THE COUNCIL AT A LATER DATE), AT THE SUBSEQUENT RESEARCH COUNCIL, BRITISH HOPES FOR CULHAM FADED IN THE FACE OF OPPOSITION BY THE FIVE SMALLER EC MEMBER STATES. IN A DECISION WHICH DID LITTLE TO SALVAGE A FAVORABLE PRESS REACTION, THE RESEARCH COUNCIL DID REACH FINAL AGREEMENT, STILL SUBJECT TO A UK RESERVE, HOWEVER, ON THE 4-YEAR JOINT RESEARCH CENTER (JRC) ENERGY RESEARCH PROGRAM FOR 1977-1980 AND DID VOTE A SHARE OF THE NON-JET FUSION RESEARCH PROGRAM FOR ISPRA. FULL DETAILS OF THE COUNCIL MEETING ARE REPORTED BELOW. END SUMMARY

3. JOINT EUROPEAN TORUS

ACCORDING TO A UK ENERGY DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN, UK MINISTER OF STATE FOR INDUSTRY GERALD KAUFMAN (THE RESEARCH COUNCIL PRESIDENT) OPENED THE JET SITING DEBATE WITH A REQUEST THAT EACH MEMBER STATE RECORD ITS POSITION ON THE ISSUE. THE UK AND THE FRG PLACED CULHAM AND GARCHING, RESPECTIVELY, IN NOMINATION. THE ITALIANS INDICATED THAT ALTHOUGH THEIR HOPES FOR ISPRA HAD NOT BEEN ABANDONED, THEY WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONCEDE, IN EXCHANGE FOR A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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JRC FUSION RESEARCH ROLE. FRANCE ANNOUNCED WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER A SITE OTHER THAN CADARACHE, BUT ADDED THAT APPROVAL OF ANY SITE WAS CONTINGENT UPON ABSOLUTE SATISFACTIN WITH THE PROJECT'S FINANCIAL PROVISIONS. THE SMALLER STATES EXPRESSED NO PREFERENCE BETWEEN CULHAM OR GARCHING. ALL STRESSED THE NEED FOR AN EARLY DECISION. FROM THERE ON, IN WHAT A COMMISSION SOURCE HAS TERMED "VERY UNPLEASANT PROCEEDINGS" THE DEBATE BOGGED DOWN ON TWO POINTS: THE UNEXPECTED ISOLATION OF THE UK IN ITS SUPPORT OF CULHAM AND THE EVEN MORE UNEXPECTED DEBATE, SPARKED BY THE FRENCH, OVER THE STRUCTURE OF THE JET PROJECT. ACCORDING TO COMMISSION AND PERMDEL SOURCES, AS SOON AS THE UK'S ISOLATION BECAME APPARENT, KAUFMAN, FROM THE CHAIR, RESTRICTED DISCUSSIONS TO A DEBATE OVER JET STRUCTURE, IN ORDER TO AVOID A VOTE ON THE SITE ITSELF AND, IN FACT, PUSHED EARLY ON FOR AN ADJOURNMENT.

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4. OUR SOURCES ARE CAREFUL TO DRAW A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE TWO ISSUES INVOLVED. THE UK WAS SEEN BY ALL OTHER PARTICIPANTS AS UNFAIRLY AVOIDING A FAVORABLE DECISION FOR GARCHING, WHICH WOULD HAVE AT LEAST PROVIDED THE ALREADY ASSEMBLED TEAM OF JET SCIENTISTS A BASE OF OPERATION. THE PARALLEL ISSUE OF PROJECT STRUCTURE, WHICH BOILED DOWN TO WHETHER THE JET COUNCIL SHOULD ACT INDEPENDENTLY OR UNDER THE COMMISSION, HAD NOT BEEN RAISED PRIOR TO THIS MEETING AND WAS VIEWED BY ALL BUT THE BRITISH AS AN ISSUE TO BE RESOLVED SEPARATELY. BENN (WHO REPRESENTED THE UK AT THE MEETING), AT AN EARLY-MORNING POST-MEETING PRESS CONFERENCE, STRESSED THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN POINTLESS TO PROCEED WITH A SITING DECISION PRIOR TO RESOLVING STRUCTURAL AND FINANCIAL QUESTIONS. HE TOLD REPORTERS THE UK PRESIDENCY HAD WORKED OUT WITH THE COMMISSION A PAPER ON THE PROJECT STRUCTURE, WHICH, IT HAD BEEN PROPOSED, THE MINISTERS WERE TO APPROVE WITHOUT DISCUSSION. THE DUTCH, HOWEVER, PRODUCED A CONFLICTING PAPER OF THEIR OWN; AND THE DEBATE WAS ON-- THE LUXEMBOURG MINISTER

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GOING SO FAR AS TO QUESTION WHETHER THE PROJECT STRUCTURE, AS PROPOSED, WOULD STAND UP IN THE EUROPEAN COURT OF JUSTICE. ACCORDING TO BENN, IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THE STRUCTURE OF THE JET PROJECT HAD NOT BEEN WORKED OUT AT ALL AND REQUIRED A GREAT DEAL

OF WORK. HE ADDED THAT THE EC WAS "WORSE THAN BACK TO SQUARE ONE AS TO HOW ONE ACTUALLY SETS IT UP," IN TERMS OF THE JET COUNCIL VOTING PROCEDURES AND CONTROL OF FINANCES. HE ADDED THAT THE EC "SHOULDN'T START THIS PROJECT UNTIL WE'VE GOT IT RIGHT; NO ONE COULD TELL US WITH ANY AUTHORITY WHAT PROVISION OF THE EURATOM TREATY GOVERNED JET" AND THAT, "IN THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE DECISION TO DO NOTHING AND START WORK AGAIN WAS THE ONLY LOGICAL ONE."

5. JUST WHY CONSENSUS, WHICH SEEMED IN FAVOR OF CULHAM JUST WEEKS AGO, SHOULD NOW HAVE SHIFTED TO GARCHING IS UNCERTAIN; BUT COUNCIL, COMMISSION, AND PERMDEL SOURCES SUGGEST TWO REINFORCING CAUSES. FIRST, THE SMALLER STATES FELT LEFT OUT OF THE ASSIDUOUS ROUND OF COURTING AND HEAD-COUNTING UNDERTAKEN BY BRUSSELS ON THE SITE QUESTION AND RESENTED THE UK AND COMMISSION VIEW THAT SUCH A DECISION COULD BE PREARRANGED WITHOUT CONSULTING ALL OF THE NINE. SECOND, THE UK COULD NOT HAVE PICKED A WORSE CLIMATE FOR PRESSING THE CULHAM CANDIDACY, GIVEN THE HOSTILE ATMOSPHERE CREATED BY THE HMG'S PERFORMANCE DURING THE AGRICULTURE COUNCIL PRICE MEETING, WHICH CONCLUDED THE MORNING OF MARCH 29.

6. THE NEXT STEPS ARE UNCLEAR. COREPER HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO RESOLVE THE JET STRUCTURE ISSUE, BUT NO DATE HAS BEEN SET FOR THE ATTEMPT AT RESOLVING THE OVERALL JET PROBLEM. IN THE MEANTIME, THE COMMISSION HAS BEEN AUTHORIZED TO EXTEND THE CONTRACTS OF JET PERSONNEL, WHICH EXPIRE MARCH 31. ONLY 43 OF THE ORIGINAL 58 SCIENTISTS ARE STILL WORKING ON THE PROJECT.

7. AT A POST-MEETING PRESS CONFERENCE, BRUNNER EXPRESSED BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT AT THE FAILURE TO REACH THE DECISION HE HAD WORKED HARD FOR AND CONFIDENTLY EXPECTED. HE REFLECTED THAT THE MISTAKE HAD, PERHAPS, BEEN MADE IN "GALAMOURIZING" THIS ONE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROJECT SO THAT THE PARTICIPANTS FORGOT ABOUT THE OVERALL SCOPE OF THE EC'S RESEARCH AIMS. UK PERMDEL OFFICIALS ARE, IN TURN, RESENTFUL OF BRUNNER'S HANDLING OF THE STRUCTURAL ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT AND ARE PARTICULARLY CRITICAL OF HIS DIVULGENCE TO THE PRESS ON MARCH 28 OF THE GENERAL TERMS OF THE PLANNED COMPROMISE PACKAGE. IN A THINLY-VEILED REMARK DIRECTED AT BRUNNER, BENN TOLD REPORTERS AT 4:30 A.M. THAT "IT IS NOT FOR ME TO ALLOCATE BLAME, BUT I WAS ASTONISHED BY THE PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION OF THE PROPOSAL," ADDING THAT "IF I PRESENTED A PROPOSAL LIKE THIS TO THE UK CABINET, I CAN TELL YOU THERE WOULD BE A CABINET RESHUFFLE." IN THE MEANTIME, SOME BRITISH OFFICIALS ARE CRITICAL OF BENN FOR HAVING SCHEDULED THE ENERGY COUNCIL BEFORE THE RESEARCH COUNCIL AND LETTING GO OF THE EURATOM LOANS LEVERAGE BEFORE LANDING JET FOR CULHAM.

8. MULTIANNUL RESEARCH PROGRAM.

KAUFMAN, AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE, MADE EVERY EFFORT TO ACCEPT THE POSITIVE BY STRESSING THE DECISIONS TO APPROVE THE 1977-1980 JRC RESEARCH PROGRAM AND TO ACCORD ISPRA A SHARE OF THE EC'S FUSION RESEARCH PROGRAM. THESE DECISIONS REMAIN SUBJECT TO A TECHNICAL UK RESERVE, TO ALLOW REFERENCE TO LONDON; BUT FINAL APPROVAL IS NOT EXPECTED TO BE LONG DELAYED. HOWEVER, IN A AGREEING, EVEN ON AN AD REFERENDUM BASIS, TO THE 4-YEAR PROGRAM, THE UK SEEMS TO HAVE LOST YET ANOTHER BARGAINING CHIP IN ITS QUEST FOR THE JET. HINTON

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